

## Return to Work Policies and Procedures for MSU's Plant and Soil Sciences Building

### **Guiding principles:**

- Necessary safety precautions dictate that research laboratories on campus resume activities in a carefully phased process.
- As part of the campus laboratory research reactivation process, individual laboratory research safety plans must be approved by PSM or HRT Department Chair, CANR Associate Dean for Research and MSU Environmental Health and Safety (EHS).
- Cleaning and disinfection must happen a minimum of two times per shift for common areas, laboratories and shared research spaces. Furthermore, all shared equipment (in laboratories and shared spaces) must be cleaned before and after each use.
- Laboratory activities previously approved under essential research criteria (minimal basic operations) may continue, but an individual Laboratory Plan must still be submitted by the PI for approval by the Department, College, EHS and/or OSVPRI.
- Laboratories that are allowed to reopen will do so at a limited capacity in conformity with state, college and university mandated guidelines. Precautions need to be added on top of existing lab safety protocols and the new precautions do not diminish them.
- All possible work off-site should continue (e.g. experiment planning, literature research, data analysis, manuscript writing).
- In the event of a new local outbreak or Executive Order, the reactivation process could be immediately suspended and University operations reverted to minimal basic operations. All researchers must have a plan to suspend research immediately if public health concerns dictate.
- Students, research associates and technicians may not be compelled to conduct research activities on campus as a condition of employment, assistantship or postdoctoral research associate support while public health orders governing individual activity remain in effect. This is also true for individuals whom are in a high-risk health category – please contact the Chairperson of HRT or PSM. Furthermore, there will be no retaliation toward individuals who choose to leave the building or stay home because they are at particular risk of infecting others with the virus.
- Undergraduate students should not be in the lab unless they are paid employees who are performing a critical function of the research.
- No research or testing involving the live SARS-CoV-2 virus will be allowed.
- Daily health monitoring and reporting prior to travel to the laboratory is required. See [https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3OTGcFjV97W6FAV](https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3OTGcFjV97W6FAV) for the reporting tool and follow guidelines provided.
- This document/these SOPs will remain binding until the MSU ORA or the OSVPRI allow for, or require, modification. Changes to this protocol will be widely distributed to all building occupants by email (using established email lists), postings will be made at the entrances of the building, and a digital copy of the document will be on the departmental websites. General communication with building occupants will be by email. Significant policy changes will be communicated in a building occupant-wide teleconference/Zoom meeting arranged by email. Any changes to the building plan will be reported to [ORA@msu.edu](mailto:ORA@msu.edu).

### **General health considerations:**

- The risk of going back to work in the laboratory with other colleagues includes contracting the virus causing COVID-19 from another contagious person by aerosol or contaminated work surfaces. Keep in mind, a contagious person may not have symptoms. Always follow current the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and recommendations ([CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)).

- All individuals should seriously consider whether they (or their family members residing with them) fall in a “high risk” category. If so, they are strongly encouraged to engage in research and other scholarly work at home while public health orders governing individual activity remain in effect.
- No food will be allowed in the building. Drinking is allowed outside the laboratory using beverages that personnel bring with them from home.
- Each PI should designate a person to clean common touch surfaces in the laboratory at least twice per shift, including but not limited to doorknobs, light switches, faucets, general use equipment.
- Should a building occupant have symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, EHS (517-355-0153/[ehs@msu.edu](mailto:ehs@msu.edu)), the Office of the University Physician (517-353-8933/[uphys@msu.edu](mailto:uphys@msu.edu)) and the Chairpersons of HRT ([bairdw@msu.edu](mailto:bairdw@msu.edu) / 517-898-9903) and/or PSM ([horganb@msu.edu](mailto:horganb@msu.edu) / 517-353-0121) must be notified immediately.
  - ➔ When someone in your research group tests positive for COVID-19, send all personnel home and the PI must contact the University Physician to report as much information as is known.

**Research reactivation on an individual laboratory/program basis will be contingent upon:**

- Building readiness approval by the Office of Planning and Budgets.
- Building evaluation by Infrastructure Planning and Facilities (IPF) and Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) must be completed before building re-entry and research reactivation can commence.
- The building re-entry plan being developed collaboratively and approved by leadership from Department of Horticulture (HRT) and Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences (PSM).
- Review/approval of a building re-entry/research reactivation safety plan by CANR, the OSVPRI and EHS.
- Completion and approval of individual laboratory research reactivation safety plans by Department Chairperson, CANR and EHS.
- Availability of appropriate PPE (e.g. gloves, cloth masks), hand sanitizer and equipment/surface disinfectant. In the event PPE or lab/equipment disinfectant supplies become unavailable, laboratories must have a plan for pausing/suspending research activities.

**Specific building access guidelines:**

- Activities in Plant and Soil Sciences Building (PSSB) are limited to those activities that can be accomplished only on campus.
- Entry points to the building for approved research staff will be limited and restricted to designated entrance/s that are key-card regulated (at least one of which is ADA compliant), and have hand sanitizer stations provided by IPF. Entrance to PSSB will be limited to two (2) sets of doors on the east/Bogue Street side (#5- 8 and #9/10). Put face masks on before entering the building and use hand sanitizer immediately upon entering. Then once in the laboratory, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Activities should be planned to maximize efficiency and minimize to the extent possible time in the building and number of individuals required to complete daily research tasks.
- All laboratory personnel must conform to all COVID-19 orders and policies established by Executive Order of the Governor of Michigan, MSU institutional policies, the Office of the Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation, EHS, CANR, and their Lab Principal Investigator.
- All university wide and building-specific guidelines for research reactivation will be discussed in a mandatory videoconference/Zoom meeting. Prior to resumption of research activity, each individual must confirm electronically that they have read and agree to guidelines in this document and individual laboratory safety plans ([https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_02RXQptEnrTcTvn](https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_02RXQptEnrTcTvn)).
- All personnel must complete the EHS “Covid-19 Safe Return to Laboratory Work” Training (<https://ehs.msu.edu/covid-19/index.html>; course ID EHS-4950-SCO).

- The policies for PSSB will be reviewed monthly, and, if necessary, updated by a building committee as federal/state/university policies change.
- Access and presence in the building will be monitored using a building-wide online system, which will record personnel name, lab association (PI) and location (room number), and automatically logs time-in and -out. The online method can be accessed at: <https://forms.gle/1UZ5ds37bjS9JKZK6>
- Periodic checks and reporting of overall compliance with building/laboratory safety measures and levels of building/laboratory activity will be conducted by the Department Chair(s) or designee.
- Building and laboratory access may be revoked for anyone found in violation of established policies and procedures. Report violations or unsafe work conditions to the Department Chairpersons.
- Within the building, access is restricted to research laboratories and associated necessary infrastructure. Utilization of conference rooms (e.g., A271, A279, A388, A496, A588), kitchenettes (e.g., A275), break rooms (e.g., A246), vending machines, etc. is prohibited. Non-essential use/occupancy of common or shared offices or desks is prohibited. All research activities that can be effectively accomplished remotely or at home must be performed away from the PSS Building.

**Base personal protective equipment (PPE) and sanitizing measures:**

- Signs emphasizing the importance of personal safety and good hygiene, and the procedures to follow, will be placed at entrances and conspicuous locations on all floors.
- Cloth masks that cover mouth and nose must be worn at all times in the public spaces in PSS Bldg. (masks have been obtained and will be provided; you also can bring your own mask). Consider the use of face shields when workers cannot consistently maintain six feet of separation from other individuals in the workplace.
- Frequent hand washing and avoiding touching one's face is recommended by the US Center for Disease Control ([CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)) to avoid infection and MSU follows these recommendations.
- All entrances of the building will have a station with hand sanitizer. Hands must be cleaned upon entering the building using this sanitizer and washed immediately upon entering the lab using soap and water for at least 20 s.
- Gloves are only to be worn within the building or research laboratory as necessitated by the specific research protocol, and when disinfecting. Hands should be washed at regular intervals during the work period to minimize the potential for infection.
- Eye protection should be worn in accordance with normal EHS lab safety procedures, and when disinfecting equipment/surfaces. Note that eye protection is recommended as PPE for COVID-19 protection. Extra safety glasses will be available and must not be shared with other personnel. All glasses worn should be cleaned with soap and water at the end of the work shift.
- Cell phones, used only for research-related activities and emergency situations, must be cleaned (e.g., wipe a 70% alcohol solution) when entering and leaving the lab. Alternatively, phones can be contained in sealable plastic bags, which should be discarded when leaving the building.

**Controlling density of workers and visitor access**

- All off-site work should continue off-site (e.g. experiment planning, manuscript writing, literature research, data analysis).
- Access to PSSB is prohibited beyond designated approved research and university support staff without specific prior approval from departmental/college leadership.
- Deliveries: Packages/mail will be left on the table in room A186 of the PSS Building. Instructions for delivery personnel (MSU, UPS, FedEx etc.) are posted on the door at the loading dock. Assigned personnel from HRT/PSM will check the area at least once a day (M-F), and distribute these shipments to the second-floor mailroom (A283/A285). USPS/Campus mail will be distributed to individual mailboxes twice a week by HRT/PSM staff. It is the responsibility of those ordering/expecting packages to retrieve their items from the mailroom. It is each PIs responsibility to

coordinate the delivery of items too large to fit in room A186, or too bulky for a single individual to move from A186 to the second-floor mailroom. All outgoing mail or packages should be labeled with the sender's name and be left in the designated area in room A285 or A186 for pick-up. This delivery plan has been confirmed with Susan Fennell (fennell@msu.edu) at University Services.

- Non-resident MSU employees: Anyone without keycard access to the PSS Building that needs to access core facilities within the building [i.e., **MSU Growth Chamber Facility (A66)**] should contact the Facility Manager (Jim Klug, [klugj@msu.edu](mailto:klugj@msu.edu), 517-353-7838) in advance to receive a copy of the current user policies and procedures, and to schedule a time to visit the facility. The facility staff will arrange for access to the building and facility. All visitors are expected to adhere to the policy and procedures in this document while in the building.
- External Contractors and Repair Personnel: External service providers need to follow the building safety plan described in this document. MSU approved outside contractors will be met by PSSB personnel upon appointment by phone or email at a building entrance door, instructed about the basic protocol of hand sanitizing and wearing masks, etc. and provided with a mask as necessary. PSSB personnel will accompany outside contractors to their designated work area. The work area needs to be cleared of lab personnel to maintain social distancing of 6 feet.
- Working alone in the research laboratory with procedures involving hazardous materials is prohibited.
- Maintain social distancing within laboratories; limit lab occupancy to ensure no crowding (6ft. radius – 113 ft<sup>2</sup>; e.g. one person per bench bay, offsetting work-stations diagonally across benches). Maximum occupancies will be posted at the entrance to each laboratory room.
- Minimize time spent in the laboratory.
- Leave the building immediately upon completion of tasks.
- Implement teamwork: avoid assigning minor tasks to multiple team members and consolidate efforts to minimize number of personnel in the laboratory/building per day.
- In the event lab space is insufficient to allow for appropriate social distancing, institute work schedules to reduce density (e.g., ≤ 4 h shifts).
- Minimize travel within the building—try to stay in your lab space as much as possible.
- Use of restrooms and elevators is restricted to one person at a time.

**Shared research infrastructure/common areas: access and disinfection plans**

- Custodial services will be responsible for cleaning common areas and high touch areas in the building, including door handles, handrails, light switches, elevator buttons, and bathrooms.
- Disinfection will be conducted using [EPA-approved disinfectant that is effective against COVID-19](#) and will follow required contact times, also listed on the EPA-approved list.
- Personnel will wear appropriate PPE when using cleaning/disinfectant products, including safety glasses and chemical-compatible impervious gloves as required.
- Non-biohazard trash bags will be secured and placed in the hallway outside of the laboratory to protect custodial staff.
- At the beginning and end of each shift/day a designated employee in each research group will walk through their laboratory space/s and disinfect common touch surfaces such as door handles, faucets and light switches, etc. using a CDC-/EPA-approved disinfectant solution (e.g., 70% ethanol and at least 5 minute dwell time). Cleaning and sanitation are everyone's responsibility.
- Use of shared equipment requires approval by the faculty member responsible for such equipment. The PI/laboratory responsible for the shared equipment item/s will establish sign-up/scheduling procedures for their equipment along with disinfection procedures (i.e., before and after each use employing a CDC-approved disinfectant solution like 70% ethanol or 1000 ppm hypochlorite and EPA-recommended dwell times). Disinfection of each shared equipment will be documented by use

of an electronic log (i.e., recording date, time, employee and disinfectant used). These procedures will be communicated to personnel approved to use the shared equipment.

- Access to PI-assigned, shared research infrastructure [e.g. cold/freezer rooms (e.g., A292, A307, A497, A505), growth/culture rooms (e.g., A292B, A399, A495), instrument rooms (e.g., A249)] is restricted to one person at a time. The responsible PI's are charged with coordinating the disinfection of these spaces (e.g., at least twice daily or per shift, whichever is greater using CDC-/EPA-approved disinfectants, and documented/recorded in an electronic log) as they are for all their other assigned research space.
- Entrance to either of the common-use Autoclave Rooms (A344 and A546) is key-card controlled and restricted to one person at a time. All users will clean the equipment and surfaces they touch (e.g., doors, control panels, valves, door knobs, light switches, faucets, counters, etc.) before and after each use, using 70% ethanol or other CDC-/EPA-approved solutions to be supplied in these rooms. In addition, general disinfection responsibilities for these rooms (i.e., twice daily 5 hours apart) is assigned to PSSB's equipment maintenance technician (K Nguyen). An electronic cleaning log will be maintained to document all such efforts (<https://forms.gle/QY6TG994Md3Vs3cx8>).

### **Administration and Oversight**

- The Department Chairpersons and the PIs are responsible for compliance with the rules in this document. However, we are all in this together and need to work together. If you see non-compliance, say something to the person. If any individual has safety concerns they can be reported to their principal investigator, Chair of PSM or HRT, CANR Dean, Environmental Health and Safety at [ehs.msu.edu](http://ehs.msu.edu) or (517) 355-0153, or the MSU Misconduct Hotline - anonymous reports can be made through an online form or by calling (800) 763-0764.
- Questions about the content of this document, or its interpretation, and concerns about compliance with these requirements (including reporting unsafe behavior) should be directed to the HRT (W.V. Baird, 517-353-0361), [bairdw@msu.edu](mailto:bairdw@msu.edu) and/or PSM (B.P. Horgan, 517-353-0121, [horganb@msu.edu](mailto:horganb@msu.edu)) Chairpersons.

### **Building contacts**

- HRT Chairperson [W.V. Baird, 517-353-0361, [bairdw@msu.edu](mailto:bairdw@msu.edu)]; HRT Office Manager (G. McKinney, 517-353-0444, [mckin134@msu.edu](mailto:mckin134@msu.edu));
- PSM Chairperson (B.P. Horgan, 517-353-0121, [horganb@msu.edu](mailto:horganb@msu.edu)), PSM Office Manager (D. Williams, 517-353-0106, [williade@msu.edu](mailto:williade@msu.edu));
- PSSB Large Equipment Maintenance (K. Nguyen, 517-353-0313, [nguyenk@msu.edu](mailto:nguyenk@msu.edu)).